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tal differentiation inherent in the proto-Slavonic language even at the epoch of closest ethnic unity evolved into conspicuous local characteristics as the race gradually spread. By the ninth century A.D., when a Slavonic tongue was first used for literary purposes, the differentiation of the several Slavonic languages and even of the dialects in each was a consummated fact of some centuries' standing.

By their very location, remote from the centers of classical culture and bordering to the west, south, and north upon tribes to which it did not penetrate until the beginning of the Christian era, the Slavs, jutting out toward the confines of Asia in a region almost devoid of natural boundaries and barriers, were inevitably exposed to the repeated impacts of alien nations from the Orient. Destined later to form a part of the great medieval trade route from the Baltic to the Black Sea, the river Dnieper, along which the easternmost portion of the primitive Slavs lived, was likewise a promising area for penetration from the north. The Slavic occupation of western Russian territory, if the identification of Herodotus's Neuri as Slavic is correct, reaches well back toward the beginning of the first millennium before Christ. The earliest historical neighbors of the Slavs in the Russian prairie country were thus the Cimmerians, whose land, according to the *Odyssey*, was always veiled in fog and darkness, for there the sun never rose nor set. Actually they were an eastern offshoot of the Thracians, who centered in the basin west of the Carpathians until they were displaced by Germanic and Celtic invaders. During the second millennium and until the eighth century B.C., the Cimmerians extended eastward beyond the Crimea and the Sea of Azov, and to them belong the scanty remnants of bronze culture found in South Russia and dating from the beginning of the first millennium before Christ. The barrier erected by the Cimmerians to a Slavic advance toward the Black Sea was later perpetuated by the Scythians, who form the first wave of Oriental nomads to sweep across the black-earth region in historical times.

The Scythians are, in fact, the earliest inhabitants of south-

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early colonizers in territory originally Finnish. The same observation applies to the Slovenes or Novgorod Slavs about Lake Ilmen, who thus approach the region of the great lakes. Just why they alone preserved the ethnic name of the Slavs remains an enigma. At any rate, they were, with the Polyane of Kiev, the most progressive of the Eastern Slavs. Located in an area ill-fitted for agriculture, they lived by hunting and trapping, by which they acquired material for barter with Scandinavian traders. Their pioneering spirit gradually carried them still further north toward Lakes Ladoga and Onega, and since only a short portage separated them from the upper Volga, we eventually find them pushing southeastward to insure a food supply from the grain fields of the Moscow district. They founded the city of Novgorod where the Volkhov flows out of Lake Ilmen, and economic and political collisions between this city and Moscow were a familiar feature of later medieval Russian history until the Muscovites emerged as victors.

Just south of the Slovenes lived the Krivichians, who dominated the headwaters of the Dvina, Dnieper, and Volga rivers and extended northwest until they collided with the Balts and Finns in the neighborhood of modern Pskov. Their chief centers, both of which owed their importance to river traffic, were Polotzk on the Dvina and Smolensk on the upper Dnieper. Since Smolensk is situated at an easy portage point between the Dvina, Lovat, and Dnieper rivers, it was one of the earliest points of Scandinavian settlement in the interior of Russia.

It stands to reason that, at the dawn of Russian history, these tribes must have in many instances progressed far beyond any patriarchal organization on the basis of kinship. Essentially an agricultural people, yet living also by hunting and trapping in newly colonized and sparsely settled areas, the Russian Slavs tended to develop beyond a purely patriarchal society as soon as they came to inhabit small farms grouped about a fortified village which served as a focal point for defense and as a rudimentary market for the exchange of their products. Such of these villages as were located on the chief watercourses developed

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into genuine trading posts and towns, the importance of which was enhanced by the penetration of foreign merchants at the beginning of the historical period. The rise of trading posts and towns gradually concentrated adjacent agricultural areas under the control of the former, producing at the same time accumulations of wealth in the hands of a new ruling class which appropriated to itself the influence formerly wielded by the elders of family, clan, and tribe. The growing prestige of the towns also broke down the various tribal differentiations, since portions of the same tribal area might fall for reasons of geography and communication under the control of different towns.

In general, the Russian tribes formed three groups distinguishable by their speech, which are reflected in our day by the tripartite division of the Russian language into three basic dialects. The northern group, comprising the Slovenes (Slavs) of Novgorod and the Krivichians, is the forerunner of the modern Great Russian dialect, the standard literary language. The central group, including Dregovichians, Radimichians, Vyatichians, and Severians, divided into two sections, of which the eastern joined the northern, or ultimately Great Russian element, while the western section (Dregovichians, Radimichians) came to form the White Russian element centering around Minsk. The southern group, made up of Polyane, Derevlians, Volhynians, Ulichians, Tivercians, and Croats, evolved into the Little Russian or Ukrainian element. In fact, the term *Ukraina* goes back as far as at least 1187, and means the southern border district. The differences among these three dialects have of course been intensified as time went on by the accidents of political affiliation and by diversified cultural influences. But these three groups are none the less parts of the same nation, so that either a White Russian or a Ukrainian is precisely as much a Russian as the purest Great Russian born in the shadow of the Kremlin.

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IV

The Formation of Russia

We have already spoken of the contacts of the primitive Slavs with the Goths during the latters' migrations of the early Christian era and the succession of invasions from Asia into the steppe country which exerted political and some cultural influence upon the Eastern Slavic tribes. At the time of the conversion of the Russians in 989 during the reign of Vladimir I at Kiev, the principality of Kiev was already a state of growing area and rising influence. It is now relevant to discuss the process by which this principality was founded, and to carry the history of the Russian state five centuries beyond Vladimir to the domination of Moscow, showing the course of events by which the national nucleus was transferred from the Ukraine to the younger northeastern principality.

In Scandinavia, and particularly in Sweden, the period from 750 to 800 A.D. was marked by pronounced activity in organization and conquest. During the ninth century Swedish interest in oriental commerce developed rapidly and caused such an active search for lines of eastward communication that before 850 Swedish settlers appeared on the southeastern shore of Lake Ladoga. About the year 900, a Swedish colony was founded at Gnezdovo, near modern Smolensk, and Swedish immigration reached the headwaters of the rivers Volga and Oka. Finds of Swedish *objets d'art* of the ninth and tenth

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175* centuries along the northern Russian watercourses which
●487 provide an easy route between the Baltic and the Volga indicate a lively activity in oriental trade, and the Swedish colonies in this area result from the opening, by the Swedes, of a new trade route to the Orient via the Volga.

175* In 859, according to the Russian *Primary Chronicle*, "Varangians from beyond the sea" imposed tribute on the northernmost Slavs in Russia and their Finnish neighbors. Within the next four years, the tributaries revolted and expelled the invaders, but finding themselves unable to preserve order, they were obliged (according to the *Chronicle*) to invite the return of their oppressors. The story continues that in response to this plea, three Varangian brothers, Rurik, Sineus, and Truvor, migrated to Russia with their kin. Rurik settled in Novgorod, two of his retainers wrested Kiev from the Khazars, and Oleg, allegedly, the regent for Rurik's young son Ivor, took Kiev from them after Rurik's death. The legendary date of the traditional calling of the princes thus harmonizes with the archaeological evidence as to the period of Scandinavian immigration. Both the *Primary Chronicle* and Arabic geographical sources refer to these immigrant Scandinavians as Rus (Russes), a name which was later applied to the Slavs they subdued and to the
[487] state which grew from the principalities they created. The Volga trade route which they first discovered rapidly declined in importance once they found that the Dnieper offered relatively easy access to Byzantium.

The civilization which the immigrant Swedes brought with them to Russian territory was essentially that of the Viking Age. The Scandinavian artifacts of the ninth and tenth centuries discovered in Russian territory indicate that their makers and owners were possessed of no mean talent in working metals (bronze, silver, gold), and were found of tasteful adornment. From their northern homes they brought a highly developed capacity for handling iron tools. Not only had the Vikings in general mastered the technique of timbered houses, but they were also capable of constructing clinker-built sea vessels up to